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## Exploration and Discovery

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THE expedition sent out in 1908 by Harvard University to the site of old Samaria under the direction of Professor Reissner has discovered a group of seventy-five inscribed fragments of old Hebrew pottery. These fragments were found in the immediate vicinity of the so-called palace of Omri and Ahab, the identification of which has been rendered still more probable by the discovery of a vase bearing the name of Osorkon II, the Egyptian contemporary of Ahab. The fragments are inscribed with Hebrew characters written in ink and are found to be business receipts for quantities of oil, wine, and the like. The Hebrew characters closely resemble those found on the Siloam inscription and the Moabite Stone. A preliminary report on the find is given by Professor Lyon in the January number of the *Harvard Theological Review*. The publication of this material in full is awaited with great interest, since it adds a valuable source of information concerning the character of early Hebrew writing.

THE British Museum about February 1 of this year began excavations at Carchemish under the firman which it has had for a considerable length of time. The director of the excavations is D. G. Hogarth, and his chief assistant R. Campbell Thompson. Carchemish, on the upper Euphrates, is a site which should yield results of great value. It was a gathering-place of the ancients. The Hittites held possession there for a long time, the Assyrians and Babylonians also had their turn, and for a while Egypt held sway. Students of Hebrew history will recall that it was at this place that Nebuchadrezzar II met and defeated Necho II, thus settling the question as to whether Egypt or Babylon should succeed to the domain of Assyria in Western Asia. Serious charges of carelessness and incompetence have been made against the excavators formerly sent out by the Museum to work upon this mound. The commitment of this expedition to Messrs. Hogarth and Thompson is a practical guaranty that the task will be performed with scientific efficiency.

A RECENT article in the *Interpreter*, by Canon Yates, resident in Jerusalem, bearing the title, "An Important Archaeological Discovery in Jerusalem," tells of the finding of a church erected by Saint Helena in the grounds of the church of the Paternoster, a little to the southwest

of the summit of the Mount of Olives, on the slope toward Bethany. The modern church of the Paternoster was erected in 1869. The fact that there had been an earlier church in this vicinity was known from a statement of Eusebius, the church historian. His testimony was corroborated by the statement of the Bordeaux Pilgrim (about 333 A.D.) to the same effect. The old church as thus far revealed seems to have measured about 250 feet in length, and 70 feet in width. A most important feature of the discovery of especial interest to churches that practice the rite of immersion as the only form of baptism is the finding of a baptistery lying several feet below the level of the floor of the church. Mr. Yates, who has himself visited the site, says that the baptistery was evidently "constructed for baptism by immersion, and there are arrangements for drawing off the water. In the center is a place perhaps a foot lower than the rest of the floor, about 18 inches wide by 30 inches long, intended quite clearly for the candidate to stand in." The intention of the excavators is said to be to restore this old cathedral church if possible.

FOR a long time there has been on exhibition in the British Museum a Syriac manuscript of the Pentateuch which is labeled as "the earliest manuscript of the Bible in any language of which the exact date is known." This manuscript bears the date of 463 A.D. On the tenth of last October, however, M. Tisserant discovered in the British Museum itself a Syriac manuscript of Isaiah four years older than the aforesaid manuscript of the Pentateuch. This newly discovered manuscript was brought from one of the famous monasteries in Nitria. It is a palimpsest, and the Syriac text of Isaiah which it contains was copied in the year 459-60 A.D. The text is of sentimental interest as now being the oldest known biblical manuscript of any extent, and will be of practical service since it seems to offer many variants to the Syriac text of Isaiah as hitherto known. A full account of the discovery with description of the manuscript and a statement of its contents will be found from the pen of M. Tisserant himself in the *Revue Biblique* for January, 1911.

THE first part of the Hamburg Papyri just published by Paul M. Meyer (*Griechische Papyrusurkunden der Hamburger Stadtbibliothek*, 1911) contains a second-century document of some interest for New Testament lexicography. The text is a complaint, addressed to the decadarch, relating to a robbery, and gives an inventory of the articles taken by the robbers. Some of these are described by familiar New

Testament words. There is a scarlet (κόκκινος) garment (cf. Matt. 27:28; Heb. 9:19; Rev. *passim*); an emerald (ζμαράγδινος; cf. σμαράγδινος, Rev. 4:3) girdle; an unfulled (ἀγναφος, Matt. 9:16; Mark 2:21) cloth; two lamp stands (λυχνίαι, Matt. 5:15; Heb. 9:2; Rev. *passim*), a pot (στάμνος, Heb. 9:4); and several hair-sieves (so Meyer renders σάκκοι τρίχινοι), or, more probably, hair-cloth garments (cf. Rev. 6:12). There was also a cloak, φαινόλης (Latin paenula), which is only another, and better, form of φελόνης (φαιλόνης, II Tim. 4:13). The papyrus comes from the Fayûm.

It has long been supposed that the Philistines emigrated into Palestine from their original home in Crete or its vicinity. The basis for this belief has been furnished by the following facts: The Philistine body-guard of David was made up of Cherethites and Pelethites, and the name Cherethites at once suggests Crete. In Zeph. 2:5, the Philistines are called "nation of the Cherethites." In Amos 9:7, Jehovah asks, "Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt and the Philistines from Caphtor?" Caphtor has been identified with the Egyptian *Keftiu*, which is the regular designation on the Egyptian monuments for Crete and its vicinity. An additional consideration in support of this identification of the region of Crete as the original homeland of the Philistines is now offered by the so-called Phaestos disk. This inscription was found in Crete in a stratum of the ruins which in all probability belongs to about 1600 B.C. An account of the discovery of the disk, together with excellent photographs, will be found in Evans, *Scripta Minoa*, Vol. I (1910). One of the commonest characters in this inscription is a head, wearing a headdress which is identical with that regularly represented on the Egyptian monuments as worn by the Philistines and other related tribes from the north which poured down upon the Nile Valley. The headdress is quite unique, being totally different from that worn by Semites in general. Consequently the disk seems to bear independent testimony to the fact that the Philistines originally came from Crete or from the coast of Asia Minor in its vicinity. An attempt is made by Professor Hempl in the January number of *Harper's Magazine* to decipher the inscription as a proto-Greek document. The attempt, however, can hardly be called successful.